

**Cluster Area IV: Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment**

**Question:** Do all children with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment that promotes a high quality education and prepares them for employment and independent living?

**Probes:**

- BF.I** Is the percentage of children with disabilities receiving special education, by race/ethnicity, significantly disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment? For each particular disability category, is the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, significantly disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment? For each particular educational setting, is the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, significantly disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment?
- BF.II** Are high school graduation rates, and dropout rates, for children with disabilities comparable to graduation rates and dropout rates for nondisabled children?
- BF.III** Are suspension and expulsion rates for children with disabilities comparable among local educational agencies within the State, or to the rates for nondisabled children within the agencies?
- BF.IV** Do performance results for children with disabilities on large-scale assessments improve at a rate that decreases any gap between children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers?
- BF.V** Are children with disabilities educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate, including preschool?
- BF.VI** Are the early language/communication, pre-reading, and social-emotional skills of preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services, improving?

**State Goal:** Developmental and performance outcomes for eligible infants and toddlers and their families and children and youth with disabilities are enhanced by the provision of appropriate services and education in settings natural for the child's age and which children without disabilities participate. (RI SIP Natural Environments)

**Performance Indicator(s):**

- BF.I** Where the percentage of children with disabilities receiving special education, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the general population, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.  
  
Where the percentage of children with disabilities in various disability categories, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to national data, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification and placement of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.  
  
Where the percentage of children with disabilities in various educational settings, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to national data, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification and placement of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.
- BF.II** High school graduation rates, and dropout rates, for children with disabilities are more comparable to graduation rates and drop-out rates for nondisabled children (3% improvement per year).
- BF.III** Suspension rates for children with disabilities are more comparable among local educational agencies within the State, and to the rates for

nondisabled children within the agencies.

**BF.IV** Participation and performance results for children with disabilities on large-scale assessments improve at a rate that decreases any gap between children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

**BF.V** Children with disabilities, 6-21 years of age, are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.  
Children with disabilities, 3-5 years of age, are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

**BF.VI** The early language/communication, pre-reading, and social-emotional skills of preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services are being addressed through several statewide initiatives focused on improving services to this population.

Baseline/Trend Data:

**BF.I** Where the percentage of children with disabilities receiving special education, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the general population, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.

Where the percentage of children with disabilities in various disability categories, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to national data, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification and placement of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.

Where the percentage of children with disabilities in various educational settings, by race/ethnicity, is significantly disproportionate to national data, a review has been conducted of the policies, procedures and practices for identification and placement of children with disabilities and they have been determined to be appropriate and race neutral.

Refer to Attachments 2a,2b and 2c.

Percentage of Children with Disabilities:

Compared to their representation in the general student enrollment, students who are black or Hispanic seem to be disproportionately under-represented in the population of students with disabilities [as it seems are students who are Asian/Pacific Islanders – students who are Indian/Alaska Natives are apparently over-represented - however, numbers of both of these categories are too small for confident interpretation in this comparison]. The proportion of students who are white who are identified as disabled falls within the acceptable range using these data.

The trend of these data since 00-01 reflects the relative population change in the racial/ethnic categories.

In contrast, data on the percentage of students in each racial/ethnic category who are identified as disabled indicates very high percentages of students who are white and students who are Indian/Alaska Natives identified as disabled. The percentages of students who are black or Hispanic are much lower, although still high by national standards. The percentages of students who are Asian/Pacific Islander are much lower.

Students Receiving Special Education Services by Resident Average Daily Membership (RADM) sub groups

Race	% w/disabilities
Indian/Alaska Native	39.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.5

Black	17.6
Hispanic	17.9
White	25.7

Disability Category:

Students who are black or Hispanic are over-represented in the category of mental retardation (1.3% of students who are Hispanic and 1.1% of students who are black are identified as having mental retardation, compared to the state average of .9%); in almost all other categories they are under-represented.

Numbers of students who are Asian/Pacific Islanders and who are Indian/Alaska Natives are too low for confident interpretation, however students who are Indian/Alaska Natives seem to be over-represented in the categories of learning disabilities (23.3% of these students compared to the average of 11.9%), emotional disturbance (6.8% of these students compared to the average of 2.2%) and hearing impairment (.8% of these students compared to the average of .2%).

In general, the data trend is fairly stable across categories, with some small variations; however, there seems to be an increasing trend for students who are Hispanic in most categories.

Educational Setting:

[Note: our data collection system is changing (December 2003) to align with these categories. These current data may be more reflective of our regulatory caseload/class size descriptions than they are of the actual locations where students receive their special education services – i.e. services being delivered by a teacher serving up to 10 students may be categorized as “self-contained” even though they are delivered fully within a general education setting.]

Students who are Black or Hispanic are under-represented in the least restrictive settings and over-represented in the most restrictive settings whether within or outside public schools; they are especially over-represented in correctional settings and in settings for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities.

There is an overall trend toward reduction in disproportionality in most educational settings, especially noticeable for students who are black in correctional facilities – however; students who are Hispanic are more over-represented in correctional facilities than in 00-01.

Students who are Indian/Alaskan natives make up only .5% of the student population, and in general their numbers are too small to allow interpretation – however, they seem to be noticeably over-represented in 02-03 in Public Separate School Facilities and in correctional facilities.

**Analysis of BF.1:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<u>July 2002-June 2003</u>  BF.1 The percentage of children with disabilities, receiving special education, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's	<u>July 2002-June 2003</u>  Rhode Island has removed Evidence of Change Statements 1.1 and 1.2 and benchmarks 1.1a, 1.1.b, 1.2a, 1.2b and 1.2c from its State Improvement Plan. In their place the three Performance Indicators from BF.I are the basis for Rhode Island's analysis of its data and progress reporting.  In all three areas – percentage of children with disabilities, disability category, and educational setting – there appear to be disproportionalities across the racial/ethnic disaggregations. Although we believe that our policies and procedures for disability

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<p>general student enrollment, by June 2003.</p> <p>For each particular disability For category, the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment, by June 2003.</p> <p>For each particular educational setting, the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment, by June 2003.</p>	<p>determination are racially and ethnically neutral, working on this cluster area has drawn us to focus our attention on the matter and will cause us to further analyze several questions that have emerged regarding differential identification patterns, different expectations for academic and behavioral performance for students of different racial/ethnic groups, social and economic effects of students living in the city environment, etc.</p> <p>These explorations will also help us to address Rhode Island's overall rate of identification of students with disabilities, one of the targets of our State Improvement Plan. We will be working with districts on implementing our new reporting system to improve the alignment of our data, using the School Support monitoring system to help districts focus on areas that may contribute to disproportionality, continuing to develop and disseminate new guidance on the identification of students with speech language disabilities, learning disabilities or other health impairment, and continue to promote high expectations and instruction that support diverse learning needs within general education.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p>BF.1 The percentage of children with disabilities, receiving special education, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment, by June 2004.</p> <p>For each particular disability category, the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's</p>	<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004</u></b></p> <p><u>Analysis of data and factors:</u></p> <p>We will explore factors that influence relative representation across racial/ethnic categories of students with disabilities, as well as disproportionate representation within the various categories of disability, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- statewide over-identification of students as disabled</li> <li>- differences among districts – analysis and focus</li> <li>- over-identification of students who are White in the categories of learning disability, language, and other health impaired (especially ADHD and ADD)</li> <li>- lower expectations for academic and behavioral performance for Black, Hispanic and Indian/Alaska Native – fewer referred</li> <li>- relatively rare identification of students who are Black or Hispanic in such categories as multiple disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, autism and traumatic brain injury (is there perhaps a lower survival rate among these students who are born with or experience disabling conditions or events?).</li> </ul> <p>We will also explore- factors influencing restrictiveness of educational setting, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- data collection system masking actual service provision settings</li> <li>- differences among districts</li> </ul>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p>general student enrollment, by June 2004.</p> <p>For each particular educational setting, the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, will be less disproportionate to the percentage of children, by race/ethnicity, in the State's general student enrollment, by June 2004.</p>	<p>- cities and poverty – population disproportionately Black and Hispanic - environments, out-of-school behaviors, high rate in training school, etc.</p> <p>- perceptions of degree of severity of disabilities (are disabilities of students who are Black or Hispanic perceived as more severe, requiring more restricted service provision, or are do they tend to be identified only when the disability is more severe?)</p> <p>Timeline: Summer and Fall 2004; Data variables will be addressed as the new data system goes into place and data are more reliable Resources: Office of Special Populations staff</p> <p><u>School Support Monitoring System:</u></p> <p>SSS visits will continue to examine LEAs' records of disproportionality of identification and restrictiveness, and work with the LEAs to analyze contributing factors and ensure that policies, procedures and practices within the LEAs are racially and ethnically neutral.</p> <p>Timeline: continuous 5-year cycle Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, school and LEA volunteer participants</p> <p><u>Guidance on Specific Areas of Disability:</u></p> <p>Guidelines continue to be developed and disseminated for the identification of students as disabled in the three most prevalent categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Speech and Language guidelines will be piloted in their final draft stage</li> <li>- the Learning Disabilities guidelines will be disseminated in two phases – the first, focusing on instruction and intervention within general education, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Department of Education's guidance on developing Personal Literacy Programs for all students reading below grade level; the second phase – interim guidance for teams until IDEA is reauthorized – will be finalized and disseminated</li> <li>- guidelines for Other Health Impaired will be addressed when the other areas are completed</li> </ul> <p>Professional development and demonstration schools to provide information about autism will continue to be supported</p> <p>Timeline: Speech Language - schools piloting the guidelines, and professional development on the guidelines throughout the state during 2003-2004 Resources: full –time specialist retained by the Office of Special Populations to support dissemination and adoption of the Speech and language guidelines; Office of Special Populations staff supporting state Learning Disabilities team; for both, other Office of Special Populations staff; volunteer team members from schools, parent organizations, LEAs, higher education, professional organizations; in the area of autism, two full-time specialists supported by the Office of Special Populations</p> <p><u>Collaboration with Other State Initiatives:</u></p> <p>We will also be working with other state initiatives, e.g. with colleagues from Cluster Area III: Parent Involvement on providing families with information on autism and other disabilities, and with the RI Parent Information Center and the Parent Support Network on disability categories and appropriate least restrictive provision of services</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
	Timeline: ongoing Resources: Office of Special Populations staff; other agency staff

**Baseline/Trend Data:**

**BF.II High school graduation rates, and dropout rates, for children with disabilities are more comparable to graduation rates and dropout rates for nondisabled children (3% improvement per year).**

Graduation Rate

	00-01 Data*	01-02 Data	02-03 Data	02-03 'Trend'
General Education	77%	83.72%	82.71	-1.01%
Special Education	67%	69.28%	73.30%	+4.02%

\* since this year, a uniform formula has been applied for general and special education graduation data – comparison is only valid between '02 and '03

Dropout Rate

	00-01 Data*	01-02 Data	02-03 Data	02-03 'Trend'
General Education	16.9%	16.28%	17.29%	+1.01%
Special Education	31.49%	30.72%	26.70%	-4.02%

\* since this year, a uniform formula has been applied for general and special education dropout data – comparison is only valid between '02 and '03

**Analysis of BF.II:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<u><b>July 2002-June 2003</b></u> <b>BF.II</b> High school graduation and dropout rates for children with disabilities are more comparable to graduation and dropout rates for nondisabled children, by 3%, by June 2003.	<u><b>July 2002-June 2003</b></u> Although another year of data is needed to determine whether there is an actual positive trend, it appears that while graduation and dropout rates of general education students may have stayed stable or changed in a slightly negative direction, graduation and dropout rates for students with disabilities seem to have improved noticeably in the last two years. [If the trend is maintained, the graduation and dropout rates have already exceeded the SIP 2007 improvement target of 3%. The dropout rate reduction, if maintained, will meet the SIP target of 50% by 2007.]  Progress has been made in the accurate collection of data from the districts and a uniform formula has been applied for the general

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
	<p>education and special education student graduation and dropout data. Some minor discrepancies exist in the data reported by some districts. For example, in three small districts the special education dropout numbers exceed the total numbers of dropouts for the entire district. RIDE will be addressing these discrepancies with the district data clerks.</p> <p>Our School Support monitoring system has been addressing district graduation and dropout rates, supporting local analysis of and efforts to promote factors that could improve students' school completion. Additionally, professional development programs in a number of areas guide and support school staff in enhancing the learning environment and success for students – in particular, programs to promote social-emotional growth, and building the capacity of teachers to differentiate instruction.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></p> <p><b>BF.II.</b> High school graduation and dropout rates for children with disabilities are more comparable to graduation and dropout rates for nondisabled children, by 3%, by June 2004.</p>	<p><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></p> <p><u>School Support Monitoring System:</u></p> <p>SSS visits will continue to examine LEAs' records on graduation and dropout rates, and work with the LEAs to analyze patterns and contributing factors and revise policies, procedures and practices to increase the percentage of students who stay in school.</p> <p>Timeline: continuous 5-year cycle Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, school and LEA volunteer participants</p> <p><u>Promoting High Expectations:</u></p> <p>We will continue to promote high expectations and support for diverse learning needs within general education through staff involvement with Rhode Island Department of Education efforts to promote Personal Literacy Programs and the High School Reform foci on literacy and personalization.</p> <p>Timeline: ongoing Resources: Office of Special Populations staff</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>Our professional development programs will continue to provide opportunities for general and special educators to increase their capacity to provide differentiation of instruction and other support for diverse learning needs, social-emotional supports, access to the general curriculum, etc.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing Resources: Office of Special Population staff; full-time specialist focusing on social-emotional supports; Capacity-building and Program</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
	funds supporting two full-time teachers to provide professional development in schools, LEAs and regions, along with funds to support participants in their follow-through



**Baseline/Trend Data:**

**BF.III:** Suspension and expulsion rates for children with disabilities are more comparable among local educational agencies within the State, and to the rates for nondisabled children within the agencies.

Refer to Tables IV-E, IVF, IVG and IVH

Suspension (and Expulsion\*) Rates - Variations Among LEAs

Suspended More than 10 Days	2001-2002	2002-2003
Percent of Special Education Students	low of 0% high of 6.1%	low of 0% high of 3.1%
Percent of General Education Students	low of 0% high of 2.6%	low of 0% high of 1.9%
Average Percent – Special Education	1.1%	.9%
Average Percent – General Education	.7%	.6%

\* Expulsion is not a descriptor used by our state

**Analysis of BF.III:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<p><b><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.III:</b> Suspension rates for children with disabilities are more comparable among local educational agencies within the State, and to the rates for nondisabled children within the agencies, by June 2003.</p>	<p><b><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></b></p> <p>The degree of variation among local educational agencies' suspension rates appears to have moderated from June '02 to June '03. The average rate of suspension of students with disabilities statewide also appears to be closer to that of general education students. Most LEAs have decreased both their rate of suspensions and the difference between suspensions of students with and without disabilities. In close to half the LEAs, students with disabilities appear to be suspended only as often as, or even less often, than general education students.</p> <p>In about one quarter of the LEAs, suspension rates and differentials are not improving, or are becoming even more marked. We will be continuing to improve the data collection system to ensure accuracy, and working with these districts on identifying factors contributing to their suspension rates. The School Support monitoring system will continue to examine the performance of LEAs regarding suspension, and support planning and programs to improve performance. We also continue to sponsor professional development on social-emotional learning and supports to assist schools and districts in developing safe, secure and productive learning environments.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.III:</b> Suspension rates for children with disabilities are more comparable each year among local educational agencies within the State, and to the rates for nondisabled children within the agencies, and are within 10% of their representation in the general population – by June 30, 2007 (SIP 2.3).</p>	<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><u>School Support Monitoring System:</u></p> <p>SSS visits will continue to examine LEAs' records on suspension rates, and work with the LEAs to analyze patterns and contributing factors and revise policies, procedures and practices to reduce the percentage of students being removed from schools.</p> <p>Timeline: continuous 5-year cycle Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, school and LEA volunteer participants</p> <p><u>Promoting High Expectations:</u></p> <p>We will continue to promote high expectations and support for diverse learning needs within general education through staff involvement with Rhode Island Department of Education efforts to promote Personal Literacy Programs and the High School Reform foci on literacy and personalization.</p> <p>Timeline: ongoing Resources: Office of Special Populations staff</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>Our professional development programs will continue to provide opportunities for general and special educators to increase their capacity to provide differentiation of instruction and other support for diverse learning needs, social-emotional supports, access to the general curriculum, etc.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing Resources: Office of Special Population staff; full-time specialist focusing on social-emotional supports; Capacity-building and Program funds supporting two full-time teachers to provide professional development in schools, LEAs and regions, along with funds to support participants in their follow-through</p>

**Baseline/Trend Data:**

**BF.IV: Participation rates and performance results for children with disabilities on large-scale assessments improve at a rate that decreases any gap between the performance of children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.**

Refer to Attachment 3

Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in State Assessment

In English/Language Arts, participation rates increased at all grades between 13% and 17% (average 15.7%):

- at 4<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 76% (2001), to 79% (2002) to 93% (2003) – net increase 17%
- at 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rates increased from 76% (2001), to 77% (2002), to 89% (2003) – net increase 13%
- at 10<sup>th</sup> grade, rates stayed at 68% (2001 and 2002), then increased to 85% (2003) – net increase 17%

In Mathematics, participation rates increased at all grades between 18% and 24% (average 20%):

- at 4<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 74% (2001), to 75% (2002), to 98% (2003) – net increase 24%
- at 8<sup>th</sup> grade, rates increased from 75% (2001), to 76% (2002), to 93% (2003) – net increase 18%
- at 10<sup>th</sup> grade, rates declined from 69% (2001), to 68% (2002), then increased to 87% (2003) – net increase 18%

Performance of Students with Disabilities on State Assessment:

In English/Language Arts, students who met or exceeded the standard increased at all grades between .1% and 4.3%:

- at 4<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 28.3% (2001), to 30.7 (2002), then declined slightly to 30.3 (2003) – net increase 2%
- at 8<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 14.3% (2001), to 15.4% (2002), then declined to 14.4% (2003) – net increase .1%
- at 10<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 11.3% (2001), to 15.3% (2002), to 15.6% (2003) – net increase 4.3

In Mathematics, students who met or exceeded the standard increased at all grades between 3.8% and 7.1%:

- at 4<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 17% (2001), to 24% (2002), to 24.1% (2003) – net increase 7.1%
- at 8<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 7% (2001), to 9.4% (2002), to 11.3% (2003) – net increase 4.3%
- at 10<sup>th</sup> grade increased from 5.7% (2001), to 8.4% (2002), to 9.5% (2003) – net increase 3.8%

English/Language Arts All students

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade 55% (2001), 62.6% (2002), 61.8% (2003) – net increase 6.8%
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade 42% (2001), 43.9% (2002), 41.4% (2003) – net decrease .6%
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade 38.3% (2001), 44.8% (2002), 42.7% (2003) – net increase 4.4%

Mathematics All Students

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade 34.3% (2001), 44.4% (2002), 41.8% (2003) – net increase 7.5%
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade 33% (2001), 33.9% (2002), 34.4% (2003) – net increase 1.4%
- 10<sup>th</sup> grade 23.7% (2001), 31.4% (2002), 34.1% (2003) – net increase 10.4%

Gap Reduction: English/Language Arts – 2001 – 2003

Students with Disabilities	Net Increase	All Students	Net Increase
4 <sup>th</sup>	2%	4 <sup>th</sup>	6.8%
8 <sup>th</sup>	.1%	8 <sup>th</sup>	.6%
10 <sup>th</sup>	4.3%	10 <sup>th</sup>	4.4%

Gap Reduction: Mathematics – 2001 – 2003

Students with Disabilities	Net Increase	All Students	Net Increase
4 <sup>th</sup>	7.1%	4 <sup>th</sup>	7.5%
8 <sup>th</sup>	4.3%	8 <sup>th</sup>	1.4%
10 <sup>th</sup>	3.8%	10 <sup>th</sup>	10.4%

**Analysis of BF.IV:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<p><b><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.IV:</b> Participation: The percentage of children with disabilities participating in State/district-wide general or alternate assessment programs with appropriate test accommodations, as needed, increases by 5% per year, reaching 100% by June 30, 2007. [adapted from SIP 3.1 and 3.2]  Target for 2003 = 80.6% participation rate in English Language Arts and 80% participation rate in Mathematics.  Performance: Performance results for children with disabilities on large-scale assessments improve by 3% per year (15% total by June 30, 2007), and at a rate that decreases any gap between the performance of children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. [adapted from SIP 3.3]</p>	<p><b><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></b></p> <p><u>Participation:</u></p> <p>Progress beyond the 10% anticipated has been attained in participation rates – since 2001, English Language Arts participation increased 15.7% to an average of 89%, and Mathematics participation increased 20% to an average of 92.6%. Most of this increase occurred between 2002 and 2003.</p> <p>Activities with our Office of Assessment that have contributed to this growth include: improving guidance for planning and carrying out accommodations and alternate assessments; emphasis on proper coding of student test materials; professional development with district special education directors and assessment coordinators; and institution of a “no-score” policy for students who don’t participate. The latter activity encouraged districts and schools to implement a variety of incentives to increase participation among all their students. Our School Support Monitoring system also addresses participation rates in school districts.</p> <p><u>Performance:</u></p> <p>It must first be noted that interpretation of Rhode Island’s state assessment results is not considered valid when comparing data from year to year. Our system allows interpretations only for “3 year rolling averages” – that is, comparisons are valid between the average of 3 years of data (e.g. 2001, 2002 and 2003) with the average of a subsequent 3 years of data (e.g. 2002, 2003, 2004).</p> <p>However, it is clearly evident even from only 3 years of data that we must report limited progress in increasing performance of students with disabilities, and in closing the gap with their nondisabled peers. There has been an increase, but not at the level of 3% per year that was targeted. Furthermore, except for the area of mathematics at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, the performance of nondisabled students appears in general to be increasing somewhat faster than that of students with disabilities.</p>

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
	<p>We can suggest a number of factors limiting the growth during this time period of the average performance levels of students with disabilities on state assessments: many more students are participating in assessments than in previous years; despite improved guidance and professional development, errors in coding linger, so that some students with only speech language or resource services – who would presumably perform at relatively high levels - are still not identified on their test booklets as having IEPs; increase in access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities takes longer to develop - through our School Support system monitoring, professional development activities and encouragement for greater support in general education settings – than does increasing their participation on state assessment.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.IV:</b> Participation: maintain or increase participation rates by 5%, to 93.5% in English Language Arts, and to 97.2 in Mathematics by June 2004; attain and maintain 100% participation in the years following.</p> <p>Performance: increase performance rates by 3 percent or more by June 2004. For future years, it must be noted that our State Assessment Program will be changing after the June 2005 spring testing period. New tests with new content will be administered in the fall of 2005, and every fall thereafter.</p>	<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><u>State Assessment Program Guidance and Student Identifier:</u></p> <p>We will continue our work with the Office of Assessment on guidance to LEAs on promoting full participation and ensuring accurate coding of student booklets. Work will also continue with a number of partners on establishing a student identifier system which will greatly improve accuracy and tracking of student participation, as well as their performance over time.</p> <p>Timeline: ongoing – identifier system expected in 2004 or 2005 Resources: Office of Special Populations and Office of Assessment staff, partners, funding</p> <p><u>School Support Monitoring System:</u></p> <p>SSS visits will continue to examine LEAs' records on participation rates and performance of students on state assessment, and work with the LEAs to analyze problematic patterns and their contributing factors and revise policies, procedures and practices to ensure access to the general curriculum, full participation in and high performance of students with disabilities on state assessments.</p> <p>Timeline: continuous 5-year cycle Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, school and LEA volunteer participants</p> <p><u>Promoting High Expectations:</u></p> <p>We will continue to promote high expectations, support for diverse learning needs, and access to the general curriculum within general education through staff involvement with Rhode Island Department of Education efforts to promote Personal Literacy Programs and the High School Reform foci on literacy and personalization.</p> <p>Timeline: ongoing Resources: Office of Special Populations staff</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>Our professional development programs will continue to provide opportunities for general and special educators to increase their capacity to provide differentiation of instruction and other support for diverse learning needs, social-emotional supports, access to the general curriculum, etc.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
	Timeline: Ongoing Resources: Office of Special Population staff; full-time specialist focussing on social-emotional supports; Capacity-building and Program funds supporting two full-time teachers to provide professional development in schools, LEAs and regions, along with funds to support participants in their follow-through

**Baseline/Trend Data:**

**BF.V: Children with disabilities, 6-21 years of age, are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.**

Percent of Students Ages 6 – 21 Who Received Special Education Outside the Regular Classroom

	December 2001			December 2002		
	< 21% of Day	>21< 60% of Day	> 60% of Day	< 21% of Day	>21<60% of Day	> 60% of Day
Statewide Average % of Students	47.2%	26.6%	22.1%	46.3%	28.1%	22.2%
Range Among LEAs of % of Students	25% to 66%	10% to 45%	6% to 46%	28% to 73%	10% to 65%	4% to 48%

**Analysis of BF.V:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<p><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></p> <p><b>BF.V: Children with disabilities, 6-21 years of age, are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.</b></p>	<p><u>July 2002-June 2003</u></p> <p>The Rhode Island Department of Education has eliminated evidence of change statement 4.3 of its State Improvement Plan and is using this performance indicator in its place.</p> <p>Our data collection system is changing (December 2003) to align with these categories. We believe that current data are more reflective of our regulatory caseload/class size descriptions than they are of the actual locations where students receive their special education services – e.g. services being delivered by a teacher serving up to 10 students may be categorized as “self-contained” even though they are delivered fully within a general education setting. The analyses we carry out through our School Support monitoring system suggest that, whereas there are differences among LEAs, in general services are delivered more inclusively than these data indicate.</p> <p>The wide variation among local education agencies of percentages of students in each category emphasizes the unreliable reporting of data on service delivery. We will be working with LEAs to explain the new data collection system and the importance of accurate reporting of data on our understanding of the restrictiveness of their service delivery. The School Support monitoring system continues to evaluate and emphasize delivery of services with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent that is appropriate for each individual student, and works with LEAs to facilitate these efforts.</p>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.V: Children with disabilities, 6-21 years of age, are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.</b></p>	<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><u>Data Collection System:</u></p> <p>A new method of collecting data on location of provision of special education services has a December 2003 start date. It will be some time before we can be sure all LEAs have adjusted their practices and can successfully report accurate data. We will be working with them on it. The first data we obtain will be shared with LEAs to demonstrate the importance of providing accurate data through this new system. When data are considered to be reasonably accurate, attention will be directed towards LEAs with more restrictive patterns of service delivery.</p> <p>Timeline: December 2003 and beyond Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, Special Education Directors, LEA census personnel</p> <p><u>School Support Monitoring System:</u></p> <p>SSS visits will continue to examine LEAs' data and efforts on location of provision of services, and work with the LEAs to analyze problematic patterns and their contributing factors. LEAs will be supported to revise policies, procedures and practices to promote education of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate, ensure access to the general curriculum, and support high performance of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Timeline: continuous 5-year cycle Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, school and LEA volunteer participants</p> <p><u>Promoting High Expectations:</u></p> <p>We will continue to promote high expectations, support for diverse learning needs, and access to the general curriculum within general education through staff involvement with Rhode Island Department of Education efforts to promote Personal Literacy Programs and the High School Reform foci on literacy and personalization.</p> <p>Timeline: ongoing Resources: Office of Special Populations staff</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>Our professional development programs will continue to provide opportunities for general and special educators to increase their capacity to provide differentiation of instruction and other support for diverse learning needs, social-emotional supports, access to the general curriculum, etc.</p>



Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
	<p>Timeline: Ongoing Resources: Office of Special Population staff; full-time specialist focusing on social-emotional supports; Capacity-building and Program funds supporting two full-time teachers to provide professional development in schools, LEAs and regions, along with funds to support participants in their follow-through</p> <p><u>Promoting Service in the Least Restrictive Environment for Students with Disabilities that Significantly Affect Functioning:</u></p> <p>We will continue to support professional development and demonstration classrooms to promote the education of students with autism and other low-incidence disabilities in the appropriate least restrictive environment, including general education settings as much as possible. We partner with our state Developmental Disabilities Council and our University Center on Disabilities (The Sherlock Center) on efforts to promote inclusive provision of services for all students, including those with developmental and other significant disabilities.</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing Resources: two full-time specialists supported by the Office of Special Population</p>

**Baseline/Trend Data:****ECT.2 and BF.V Preschool children with disabilities are educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.**

During the self-assessment process completed in 2001-02, a review of the state and national data indicated that in Rhode Island, 66.5% (December 2000) of children 3-5 are receiving special education and related services in an integrated setting. This ranks Rhode Island as the 4<sup>th</sup> highest state in providing inclusive setting for preschool children. At the district level, LEAs are providing a continuum of integrated settings; the most common being integrated preschool programs located at elementary schools.

**Analysis of ECT.2 and BF.V**

Data from December 2001 reflects 72.62% of pre-school children being educated in early childhood settings. In December 2002 this increased slightly to 73.84%. From the analysis of this data, it appears the RI is educating preschool children with disabilities with nondisabled peers to the extent appropriate. In order to maintain this level of inclusion, a focus will be on further enhancing inclusive settings with the school and in the communities.

**Targets for ETC.2 (2002-03):**

Targets (Section 2 and 4)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p>ECT.2 and BF.V</p> <p>Maintain that preschool children with disabilities are educated with non disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.</p>	<p>RI has continued to maintain the requirement of educating preschool children with disabilities with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.</p>	

Targets (Section 2 and 4)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
	<u>July 2002-June 2003</u> A Workgroup was formed of LEAs, Early Childhood Providers and families to review current practices and recommend best practices for servicing preschool children with disabilities in an inclusive setting.	The guide for Pereschool IEP Teams will be piloted and evaluated.
	<u>July 2002-June 2003</u> A guide for Preschool IEP tEams is being developed to support appropriate inclusive settings.	<u>July 2003-June 2004</u> Professional development, as part of thte joing CSPD system, will be implemented statewide on the use of the guide in IEP Team decision-making to educate preschool children with disabilities with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent aproprate.

**Baseline/Trend Data:**

**BF.VI:** The early language/communication, pre-reading, and social-emotional skills of preschool children with disabilities receiving special education and related services are being addressed through several statewide initiatives focused on improving services to this population.

We do not yet have baseline or trend data or targets for this area.

**Analysis of BF.VI:**

Target (Section 2)	Explanation of Progress/Slippage for 2002-03 (Section 3)
<u>July 2002-June 2003</u> <b>BF.VI:</b> No target.	<u>July 2002-June 2003</u> While we do not have data to determine whether progress has been achieved or maintained, or slippage has occurred, a number of initiatives have been specifically focused on improving services provided to this age group. Some examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keys to Quality- Office of Special Populations staff have worked with Partners for several years to promote this program of professional development and support to improve the quality of early childhood education</li> <li>- <i>RI Early Learning Standards are in the final stages of development by early childhood constituents describing what children should know and be able to do by age 5.</i></li> <li>- <i>Early Childhood Workshops have been held in the summer for several years to provide professional development</i></li> </ul>

Target (Section 4)	Activities, Timelines and Resources for 2003-04 (Sections 5 and 6)
<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><b>BF.VI:</b> We will discuss mechanisms for how data might be gathered to address this Performance Indicator.</p>	<p><b><u>July 2003-June 2004 ff</u></b></p> <p><u>Target Setting:</u></p> <p>Appropriate constituencies will consider methods for gathering data and setting targets in this area.</p> <p>Timeline: 2003-2004 Resources: Existing committees, Office of Special Populations and partners</p> <p><u>RI Early Learning Standards</u></p> <p>Constituent groups are in the final stages of production of the RI Early Learning Standards, with publication expected in the Fall of 2003. Extensive professional development is being planned for early childhood providers including preschool special education, childcare, and Head Start teachers, and family childcare providers. The professional development will focus on using the standards in early childhood programs to support children's development toward the standards.</p> <p>Timeline: Publication of standards in the Fall of 2003; professional development beginning Fall 2003 Resources: Office of Special Populations staff, partners</p> <p><u>Family Materials:</u></p> <p>Following the publication of the Early Learning Standards and the initiation of the professional development program, a set of Family Materials will be produced that align with the standards to support families' participation in their children's learning and development.</p> <p>Timeline: Publication of Family Materials expected in early 2004 Resources: Office of Special Populations, partners</p>